

# 74 Numbers

Cardinal numbers are used for counting and saying how many of something there are. Ordinal numbers give the position of something in an ordered list.

See also:

Singular and plural nouns **69**

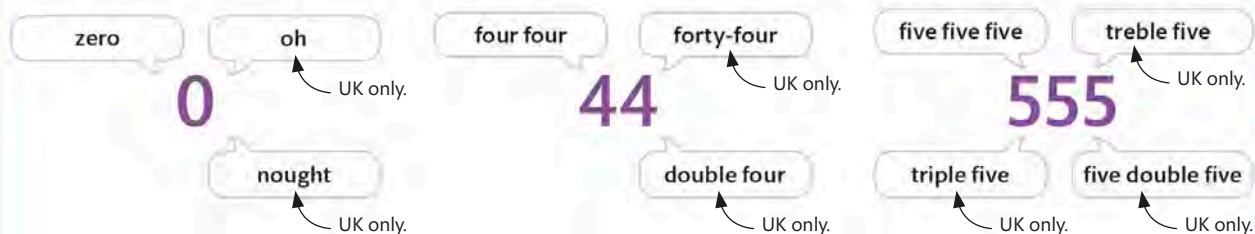
Quantity **75** Approximate quantity **76**

## 74.1 CARDINAL NUMBERS

<b>1</b> one	<b>2</b> two	<b>3</b> three	<b>4</b> four	<b>5</b> five	<b>6</b> six
<b>7</b> seven	<b>8</b> eight	<b>9</b> nine	<b>10</b> ten	<b>11</b> eleven	<b>12</b> twelve
<b>13</b> thirteen	<b>14</b> fourteen	<b>15</b> fifteen	<b>16</b> sixteen	<b>17</b> seventeen	<b>18</b> eighteen
<b>19</b> nineteen	<b>20</b> twenty	<b>21</b> twenty-one	<b>22</b> twenty-two	<b>30</b> thirty	<b>40</b> forty
<b>50</b> fifty	<b>60</b> sixty	<b>70</b> seventy	<b>80</b> eighty	<b>90</b> ninety	<b>100</b> one hundred

## 74.2 SAYING NUMBERS

In US English, people say "zero" for the number "0," whereas in UK English, other words for "0" are possible. When listing repeated numbers, for example part of a phone number, in US English each number is said individually. In UK English, other expressions are possible.



## 74.3 LARGE NUMBERS

You can say "one hundred" or "a hundred." Both are correct. Don't add "s" to "hundred," "thousand," or "million."

100  
one hundred  
a hundred

101  
one hundred and one

200  
two hundred  
No "s" at the end.

1,000  
one thousand  
a thousand

1,200  
one thousand, two hundred

3,000  
three thousand

1,000,000  
one million  
a million

1,300,000  
one million, three hundred thousand

40,000,000  
forty million

Commas are used to separate long rows of figures.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

In UK English, add "and" before the last two numbers to say numbers higher than one hundred. In US English, this is considered informal.

2,876  
two thousand, eight hundred and seventy-six  
"And" goes before "seventy-six."

54,041  
fifty-four thousand and forty-one

100,922  
one hundred thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two

296,308  
two hundred and ninety-six thousand, three hundred and eight

Use commas to separate millions, thousands, and hundreds.

1,098,283  
one million, ninety-eight thousand, two hundred and eighty-three

## 74.4 SIMILAR SOUNDING NUMBERS

It is important to stress the correct syllable in these numbers to avoid confusion.

Stress the last syllables.

13 thirteen

14 fourteen

15 fifteen

16 sixteen

17 seventeen

18 eightteen

19 ninteen

Stress the first syllables.

30 thirty

40 fourty

50 fifty

60 sixty

70 seventy

80 eightty

90 ninty

## 74.5 ORDINAL NUMBERS

**1st**

first

**2nd**

second

**3rd**

third

**4th**

fourth

**5th**

fifth

**6th**

sixth

**7th**

seventh

**8th**

eighth

**9th**

ninth

**10th**

tenth

**11th**

eleventh

**12th**

twelfth

**13th**

thirteenth

**14th**

fourteenth

**15th**

fifteenth

**16th**

sixteenth

**17th**

seventeenth

**18th**

eighteenth

**19th**

nineteenth

**20th**

twentieth

**21st**

twenty-first

**22nd**

twenty-second

**30th**

thirtieth

**40th**

fortieth

**50th**

fiftieth

**60th**

sixtieth

**70th**

seventieth

**80th**

eightieth

**90th**

ninetieth

**100th**

one-hundredth

## 74.6 DATES

In the US, people often describe dates by writing cardinal numbers and saying ordinal numbers.

In the UK, people use ordinal numbers to write and say dates.

In US English, the number is written after the month.

May eighteenth

His birthday is on



May 18 (US)

May the 18th (UK)

the 18th of May (UK)

May the eighteenth

the eighteenth of May



## 74.7 FRACTIONS

You might see fractions written out as words. Aside from “half” ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) and “quarter” ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ), the bottom number of a fraction is written or spoken as an ordinal number.

$\frac{1}{4}$

a quarter

Use ordinal numbers for the bottom of a fraction.

$\frac{1}{3}$

a third

$\frac{1}{2}$

a half

Use cardinal numbers for the top of a fraction.

$\frac{3}{5}$

three fifths

$1\frac{1}{2}$

one and a half

Use “and” to link a whole number and a fraction.

## 74.8 DECIMALS

Decimals are always written as numbers, not words. The decimal point is spoken as “point,” and all numbers after the decimal point are spoken separately.

There are three ways of saying decimals that begin with 0.

point five

0.5

nought point five

UK only.

zero point five

1.7

one point seven

3.97

three point nine seven

This is not said as “three point ninety-seven.”

Decimal points are written in English using a period, or full stop.

## 74.9 PERCENTAGES

The % symbol is written and spoken as “percent.” “Per cent” is also sometimes written in UK English. Percentages are normally written as numbers, not words.

1%

one percent

99%

ninety-nine percent

55.5%

fifty-five point five percent

12%

twelve per cent

70%

seventy per cent

100%

one hundred per cent

# 75 Quantity

In English there are many ways to express general or specific quantities, say whether quantities are adequate, and compare different quantities.

See also:

Singular and plural nouns 69

Countable and uncountable nouns 70

## 75.1 USING QUANTITY PHRASES

English has different phrases for quantities when the exact number is not known.

"Some" is used when there are more than one, but the exact quantity is unknown.

There are **some** buildings.



"A few" is used for small numbers.

There are **a few** buildings.



"Lots of" is used for large numbers.

There are **lots of** buildings.



## FURTHER EXAMPLES

There are **some** very old trees in my local park.



There are **a few** items on the menu that I'd like to try.



There are **a few** sights that I'd like to see while I'm here.



There are **lots of** mountains in the Alps that I'd love to climb.



There are **some** vegetables that I really don't like.



There are **a few** cars parked outside my house.



**Lots of** my friends rely on trains to get to work.



There are **lots of** people waiting outside the gallery.



## 75.2 "ENOUGH / TOO MANY" WITH COUNTABLE NOUNS

"Enough," "not enough," and "too many" are used to talk about quantities of countable nouns, which are objects or things that can be easily counted.



We need four eggs.  
Do we have **enough**?

"Enough" is used  
for questions.



We have two eggs. That's **not enough**.

Indicates there are too few.



We have four eggs. That's **enough**.

"Enough" is the correct amount.



Don't use five eggs. That's **too many**.

Indicates more than enough.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

There are **enough** apples here.

I **don't** have **enough** shoes.

There **aren't enough** employees.

You have **too many** clothes.

## 75.3 "ENOUGH / TOO MUCH" WITH UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

"Enough," "not enough," and "too much" are used to talk about amounts of uncountable nouns, which are things that cannot easily be counted.



We need eight ounces of flour. Do we have **enough**?



**not enough** flour

Indicates too little.



**enough** flour

Indicates the  
correct amount.



**too much** flour

Indicates more than is  
needed or wanted.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

There is **enough** milk.

There **isn't enough** time.

I **don't** have **enough** energy.

There is **too much** food.



## 75.4 "A LOT OF" AND "LOTS OF"

"A lot of" and "lots of" are commonly used informally before uncountable nouns and plural countable nouns to indicate that there is a large quantity of something.

**A lot of**  
**Lots of** } people play sports to keep fit.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

There was **a lot of** food at the event.



The charity received **lots of** donations.



The event raised **a lot of** money.



**Lots of** people enjoy charity events.



## 75.5 "LITTLE" FOR SMALL AMOUNTS

"Little" is used with uncountable nouns to say that there is not much of something in UK English. It emphasizes how small the amount is.

**little** = not much

I have **little** money left. I can't afford to visit the wildlife park.



"Little" can also be used as a pronoun to mean "not much."

**Little** can be done about the decreasing number of red squirrels.



"A little" is used with uncountable nouns to mean "some." It emphasizes that the amount, though small, is enough.

**a little** = some

I have **a little** money left. Should we visit the wildlife park?



Informally, "a (little) bit of" can be used instead of "a little."

There's **a little bit of** the park that we haven't seen yet.



## 75.6 "FEW" FOR SMALL NUMBERS

"Few" is used with plural countable nouns to say that there are not many of something. It emphasizes how small the number is.

**few** = not many

There are **few** rare birds here.  
We probably won't see any.

"A few" is used with plural countable nouns to mean "some." It emphasizes that the number, though small, is enough.

**a few** = some

There are **a few** rare birds here.  
We might see one.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

"Few" can also be used as a pronoun to mean "not many."

**Few** are willing to contribute to the upkeep of the national park.



"Very" can be used to stress that the number of something is even smaller.

I wanted to see an owl, but **very few** can be seen during the day.



## 75.7 "QUITE A FEW" AND "QUITE A BIT (OF)" FOR BIG QUANTITIES

The phrases "quite a bit of" and "quite a few" are understatements that actually mean "a lot" or "many."

**quite a few** = many

The park is home to **quite a few** species.



**quite a bit of** = a lot of

There is **quite a bit of** open space for the animals.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**Quite a few** of the students in my class don't like History.



There are **quite a few** books that I'd like to read.



There's still **quite a bit of** snow on the ground.



She ate **quite a bit of** cake at her birthday party.





## 75.8 "MORE"

"More" is used to show that there is a greater quantity or amount of something. It is used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

I'm buying **more** cookies.

"Cookies" is a countable noun.



We need **more** milk.

"Milk" is an uncountable noun.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

I like spending **more** time with my family.

Our new house has **more** space.

We raised **even more** money for charity.

"Even" can be added for emphasis.

**More and more** people are donating.

"More and more" shows that the amount is increasing over time.

## 75.9 "FEWER" AND "LESS"

"Fewer" and "less" are used to show that there is a smaller quantity or amount of something. "fewer" belongs with plural countable nouns and "less" with uncountable nouns.

**Fewer** people drive cars these days.

"People" is a plural countable noun.



Traveling by bus or train uses **less** fuel.

"Fuel" is an uncountable noun.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

There are **fewer** whales in the oceans nowadays.



We need to spend **less** money.



**Fewer** people enjoy gardening these days.



There is much **less** traffic today.



## COMMON MISTAKES "FEWER" AND "LESS"

It is important to remember the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns when using "fewer" and "less."


"Fewer" is only used with plural countable nouns.


"Less" is only used with uncountable nouns.



I have **fewer** potatoes than I need. 

I have **less** potatoes than I need. 

I have **fewer** flour than the recipe requires. 

I have **less** flour than I need. 



## 75.10 "MORE THAN," "LESS THAN," AND "FEWER THAN"

"More than" is used when talking about amounts or quantities of countable and uncountable nouns.

Lions eat **more than** 15 pounds of meat each day.



"Fewer than" is used for groups of people or things.

There are **fewer than** 3,500 tigers in the wild.



"Less than" is used when talking about amounts, distances, time, and money.

The wildlife park costs **less than** \$5 to visit.



## FURTHER EXAMPLES

The committee holds meetings **more than** 5 times a month.



There were **more than** 100 people at the event.



Charity workers are paid on average **less than** \$10 an hour.



The charity survives with **fewer than** 20 volunteers.



There are **fewer than** 50 tickets left for the charity concert.



You can donate **less than** the recommended amount.



# 76 Approximate quantity

If specific figures are known, it can be useful to give them. However, more general terms may be needed if figures are not known, or to avoid repetition.

See also:

Singular and plural nouns 69

Numbers 74 "As... as" comparisons 96

## 76.1 APPROXIMATE QUANTITIES

There are certain quantifying phrases used in English when exact figures are not known, or not necessary to give.



**3 out of 15 students live off campus.**

**In some cases, students live off campus.**

"Some" is very unspecific. The only numbers it could not mean in this example are none, one, or 15.

### TIP

"Minority" and "majority" are often qualified, for example "small minority" or "vast majority."

## FURTHER EXAMPLES



A minority is less than half, but often refers to much less than half.

**In a minority of cases,**  
**In a few cases,** } **employers provide funding for education.**



"Most" and "majority" refer to more than half.

**In most cases,**  
**In the majority of cases,** } **students can contact their professors online.**



These unspecific references could mean a majority or minority of cases.

**In some cases,**  
**In a number of cases,** } **students can live in dorms on campus.**



## 76.2 APPROXIMATE STATISTICS

Statistics can be made more general by modifying them with words such as “approximately,” “about,” “just,” “well,” or “almost.”



**Approximately**  
**About** } half of the students are from Europe.

Indicate that the quantity is not exact.



**Just under** a third of the assessment consists of coursework.

Indicates that the difference is small.



**Well over** 50 percent of the course is online.

Indicates that the difference is large.



**Almost** all of the lessons are one hour long.

Indicates that the number is slightly less.

## 76.3 SURPRISING NUMBERS

Certain expressions are used to show that a particular number or quantity is surprising.



Other universities charge **as much as** €100 for this service.

This indicates that €100 is a surprisingly large amount of money.



For **as little as** \$5 per semester, you can join the club.

This indicates that \$5 is a surprisingly small amount of money.



There are **as many as** 25 free student events each month.

This indicates that 25 is a surprisingly large number of events.



The library is generally closed for **as few as** 2 days a month.

This indicates that 2 is a surprisingly small number of days.